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Editorial

The armed revolutionary movement is all-sidedly advancing

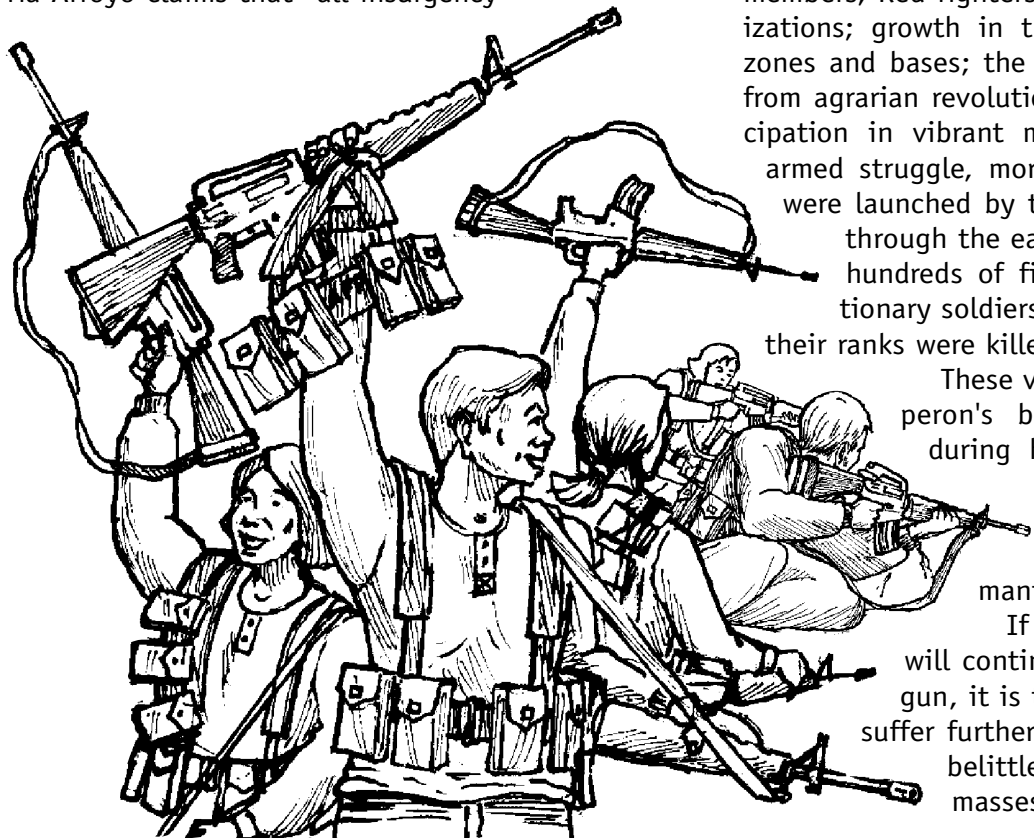
Like his failed predecessor, new Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano is full of hot air. He vows to continue the momentum that his forerunner Gen. Hermogenes Esperon had supposedly gained in reducing the armed revolutionary movement to "ineffectiveness" by 2010. An equally boastful statement from their master Gloria Arroyo claims that "all insurgency

parameters are on the downtrend, with NPA numbers plummeting to a historic low."

These boisterous remarks are, however, belied by successive reports of all-sided advances of the revolutionary movement in various regions and guerrilla fronts nationwide. To name a few, these advances include the continued increase in the number of Party members, Red fighters and revolutionary mass organizations; growth in the number of guerrilla fronts, zones and bases; the benefits reaped by the masses from agrarian revolution; and their heightened participation in vibrant mass protests. In the field of armed struggle, more than 500 tactical offensives were launched by the New People's Army in 2007 through the early part of 2008 alone, wherein hundreds of firearms were seized from reactionary soldiers and a significant number from their ranks were killed.

These victories were achieved amid Esperon's baseless pronouncements that during his 22-month tenure, the AFP had dismantled 28 guerrilla fronts and downgraded 10 more towards eventual dismantling.

If there is anything General Yano will continue from what Esperon had begun, it is to witness the reactionary army suffer further losses even as it continues to belittle, deceive and brutalize the masses waging revolution. **AB**



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Fuelling hunger across the globe **PAGE 8**

General Yano's reward scheme is doomed to fail

In the face of serious doubts expressed by various sectors, newly appointed AFP chief of staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano has retracted declarations that the revolutionary movement will be wiped out by 2010. Instead, he stated that the revolutionary movement would be "reduced to insignificance" by that time.

One indication of General Yano's superficial measures to counter the growing revolutionary movement is his scheme of granting up to P300,000 in monetary incentives to every military unit that can "take down a guerrilla base" in its area of responsibility. There are likewise cash rewards to field units, officers or soldiers "for capturing top" revolutionary leaders, taking rifles from captured or slain Red fighters and hitting their targets.

There is nothing new in the military's cash incentive scheme except that it is now being publicized and openly admitted. Ever since, AFP officials have been conniving with each other to fabricate and embellish reports and make money out of them. They make up reports about operations supposedly conducted and victories allegedly gained against the NPA to reflect these on their records, trumpet sham reports to the media, and collect the funds allocated for operations

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NPA seizes 35 firearms in Southern Mindanao

The New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao seized 35 firearms in five tactical offensives conducted in Davao Oriental, Davao City, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte and North Cotabato this May.

In Davao Oriental, the NPA attacked the Davao Oriental Provincial Rehabilitation Center in Mati City this May 19. Initial reports said the guerrillas wearing military uniforms were aboard an Elf truck when they assaulted the prison and disarmed the guards without firing a single shot. After 30 minutes, the guerrillas carted off two M16s, two carbines, an M14, a .45 cal pistol, three 9 mm pistols and a .22 cal Magnum revolver.

In Davao del Norte, the NPA seized at least three M16s in an ambush on elements of the 1007th Police Mobile Group at around 2:30 a.m. in Sitio Tabunan, Barangay Cadunan, Mabini. One policeman was killed and 11 others wounded in the ambush.

That night, two soldiers were wounded, including the team leader Lieutenant Gabawa when an NPA unit clashed with elements of the 67th IB and PNP Special Action Force conducting patrols in Upper Hulid, San Isidro, Cateel, Davao Oriental.

Prior to this, the 1st Pulang Bagani Company of the Merardo Arce Command (MAC) of the NPA in Southern Mindanao confiscated 10 high-powered firearms when it attacked and disarmed security guards of despotic and antiworker businessman Rafael Lorenzo in Barangay Pangyan, Calinan District, Davao City on May 11. Seized were four M14s, three Garands, an M4, an M16 and an M79 grenade launcher.

The guerrillas also took into custody Lorenzo's bodyguard Jose Manero for investigation.

In Davao del Sur, the Magtanggol Roque Command seized nine firearms consisting of seven shotguns, a grenade launcher and an automatic rifle in a raid on paramilitary leader Paterno Ines' house on May 8 in Kapatagan, Digos City. Ines, who actively supported the



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39th IB's military campaigns and was involved in numerous human rights violations was killed in the raid.

In North Cotabato, the NPA Herminio Alfonso Operational Command (HAC-NPA) seized a Garand and a shotgun in a raid on a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Anapulon, Arakan. Earlier, three soldiers were killed and 21 wounded in an ambush by the HAC-NPA on the 39th IB in Ilustre, Roxas in the same province.

In a statement dated May 13, the MAC said that up to 62 tactical offensives have been launched by NPA units under its command since April 3 when the 10th ID began the most massive military operation in the region to date. Despite simultaneous operations by 10 AFP battalions all throughout Southern Mindanao, the NPA has been able to inflict the equivalent of a platoon of casualties on the enemy. Nineteen soldiers have been killed and 26 wounded in a span of five weeks. **AB**

Tactical offensives in Bicol and Samar

Three AFP elements were killed while another was wounded in successive clashes between the Philippine Army and the New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol and Samar in the third week of May.

A soldier belonging to the 65th IB died in an ambush staged by Red guerrillas of the Nerissa San Juan Command on the morning of May 19 in Barangay San Isidro, Pandan, Catanduanes. The ambush took place an hour after an NPA unit harassed a Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) in Barangay Panuto in the same town.

Two days earlier, a government soldier belonging to the 65th IB was killed and another wounded after a harassment operation by Red fighters in Barangay Cahang, Bagamanoc, Pandan.

In Northern Samar, a 63rd IB element died in an ambush conducted by the NPA in Sitio Tugbo, Barangay Bato, Gamay on May 16. **AB**

Revolutionary movement in Cagayan Valley attains all-sided advances

The Cagayan Valley region continuously achieves revolutionary victories amid the US-Arroyo regime's relentless military campaigns.

The 5th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army composed of four regular battalions is currently deployed in the area. The 21st IB and 77th IB forces are stationed in the area as well, along with three Reconnaissance Companies, a company-size unit of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army bandit group and a company of the Philippine Marines, on top of the 49th Separate Rifle Coy and elements of the Police Mobile Group.

The 5th ID focused on Cagayan Valley while the 502nd Bde concentrated on southern Isabela-Quirino aside from conducting continued attacks in Central Isabela the previous year. They implemented massive RSOT operations in 24

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that never took place.

With General Yano's "unofficial" approval of the bounty scheme, we can expect the media to be flooded with fake reports of AFP "victories" against the NPA.

Worse, human rights violations are expected to escalate as the spate of political killings of legal activists, suspected supporters of the revolutionary movement and even innocent civilians will be reported as "triumphs" against the NPA. In fact, a peasant leader was gunned down in Davao City by AFP forces on the very first day of Yano's term.

With the bounty scheme as incentive, AFP attacks and burning down of clusters of farmers' homes and peasants' working camps will be falsely reported as "dismantling of rebel camps." Staged "surrenders" of civilians will likewise be reported as mass surrenders of Red fighters.

The blatant lies and brutality that the US-Arroyo regime and the AFP under the leadership of General Yano intend to spread can only be confronted head-on by more victories and further advances of the revolutionary movement. Even now, the entire revolutionary movement is preparing and conducting comprehensive actions and offensives for a resounding celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Party and the NPA.

The revolutionary movement is currently fulfilling the requisites to enable it to achieve a major leap in the current stage of people's war and accelerate revolutionary advances until total victory is achieved. **AB**

barangays in Cagayan Valley that usually lasted from three months to a year. They coerced barangay officials to become CAFGU elements and put up additional CAFGU units. Activists were harassed and forced to join the CAFGU to "prove" that they had no links with the NPA. This resulted in the formation of 19 CAFGU units in the region. This number has, however, dwindled with the exposé of the CAFGU's antipeasant character.

Contrary to the AFP and Arroyo regime's sham reports on the weakening and demoralization of the revolutionary forces in Cagayan Valley, the revolutionary movement in the region has in fact achieved greater victories and advances, based on the three-year assessment report of the region from 2005 to 2007.

Party-building. Party membership doubled and the number of party cadres increased by 33%. The number of local Party branches rose by 48% while the number of section committees soared by 80%. Aside from these quantitative growths, the quality of Party members also showed marked improvement. Close to 98% of NPA guerrillas finished the Basic Party Course. Up to 88% of NPA cadres have finished the intermediate course while preliminary studies on the advanced course have been initiated at the regional level.

Armed struggle. Membership in the people's army grew by 20%, leading to the formation of a number of new NPA fighting units. Nineteen military actions in 2007 were launched, in the form of ambushes, raids, sniping and disarming operations. In a short span of three years, firearms increased by 73%. Meanwhile, village militia units registered an increase of 84%, with membership posting a

95% increase. Self-defense units expanded by 30% with membership growing by 43%.

These advances have invigorated armed struggle in the region. NPA units overcame offensives initiated by enemy soldiers, inflicting 49 reported casualties and an undetermined number of wounded even as the NPA was able to preserve its troop strength and resources. Amid the reactionary government's massive military operations, the Red fighters were able to launch political-military trainings as well as mobile trainings on the company, platoon, section and squad levels. Trainings on individual combat techniques were likewise conducted, along with a political officers' conference at the regional level. These trainings produced new officers and fighters who have been further tempered in battle.

Mass base. Hundreds of thousands of farmers reaped the fruits of agrarian revolution. They succeeded in preventing landlords from grabbing their land. Land rent, irrigation fees and interests on usury were reduced. Wages of farmers workers were raised along with the prices of their products. Labor exchange among farmers' groups was vibrant, and the campaign to plant rice, vegetables and white corn which does not require massive doses of fertilizers and pesticides was stepped up. Mass organizations succeeded in improving production and promoting multiple cropping. Labor cooperation was improved in the barangays.

Health services were also provided and improved in the barrios. Village drug stores were set up, campaigns for malaria prevention were launched, barrio health committees were formed with their members undergoing trainings on



the prevention and cure of different diseases that afflict the area. Cooperatives were established and rehabilitation and relief operations were conducted during calamities. Transport fares were likewise reduced. Through alliance work, roads were repaired and electricity was provided in far-flung areas—services that brought immediate relief to the impoverished masses.

Mass campaigns on the protection of the environment were launched as well as through extensive education implemented by comrades. They promoted reforestation programs and called for the protection of watershed areas. Logging was prohibited in specific areas, usually in newly regrown forests, and preservation measures tackled and implemented in an organized manner. The masses and the people's army also firmly resisted the relentless quarrying that has destroyed the farms of hundreds of families in a guerrilla front.

Amid the ruthless Oplan Bantay Laya, the revolutionary movement in Cagayan Valley has gained strength and expanded. It will definitely gain even more victories as the people wage their life-and-death struggle against the much-hated state that has caused all their suffering. AB

Unity against huge mining companies

Delegates to the 24th anniversary of Cordillera Day on April 24 were one in opposing large-scale and commercial mining operations in their ancestral domain. Leaders of the Binongan tribe read before some 3,000 delegates a seven-point Unity Pact pledging their continued resistance to Olympus Pacific Mining Inc., a Canadian company, and the prevention of other giant mining corporations from entering their ancestral land. The ancestral domain of the Binongan people is approximately equivalent to the 11 barangays of Baay-Licuan town located in north-east Abra, close to the province's boundary with Kalinga.

Olympus started drilling operations in the barrio of Capcapo in Baay-Licuan in February 2007. The residents succeeded in blocking its operations in August 2007 following five months of petitioning the authorities. Olympus, however, persisted by going around the barangays of Lenneng, Bonglo, Poblacion, Cawayan, Domenglay, Mogao, Bulbulala, Tumulip, Nalbuan and Subagan to persuade residents to allow it to resume mining operations. To "soften the ground" for the reentry of Olympus, the 41st IB was re-deployed in January in barrios surrounding Capcapo.

As a result, the Unity Pact included an agreement vowing continued vigilance against all attempts by Olympus and other huge mining firms to violate and manipulate the right of the communities to free, prior and informed consent before any mining firm undertakes any action. Olympus has been using coercion and deception in its effort to resume operations despite the strong resistance of the Binongan tribal communities and their clear stand against the entry, exploration and operations of Olympus and its business partners Abra Mining and Industrial Corp. (AMIC) and Jabel Corporation.

The Binongan tribe also denounced the Mining Act of 1995 as it merely legalizes the plunder of the resources of national minorities, especially in their ancestral domain.



Arroyo's dirty maneuvers against the Lopezes

Gloria Arroyo is now targetting the Lopez family and its properties in order to divert people's attention in the face of the series of exposés of her corruption, deception, rottenness and crimes against the people. Arroyo has long been looking for a strong case against the Lopez clan because of the latter's refusal to kowtow before her and because ABS-CBN, the powerful mass media company owned by the Lopezes, is a staunch critic of her regime. Arroyo considers this a big deterrent to her plans of clinging to power beyond 2010.

Among the Lopezes' most vulnerable targets is the Manila Electric Co. (MERALCO) due to its own greed and exploitative practices. Arroyo's attack on MERALCO and the Lopez family was timed with the recent announcement of another increase in electricity rates by 97.53 centavos per kilowatt hour to make it appear that she is after the interest of the greater number of poor consumers.

The regime's maximum objective is to deprive the Lopezes of an economic base in order to reduce support to the opposition, cripple ABS-CBN and force the Lopezes to their knees. The Arroyo regime is attempting to wrest control over Meralco from the Lopezes through the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and other government agencies holding 33% of the company stocks. The matter will be voted upon in a stockholders' meeting on May 27. It will be difficult, however, for the Arroyo camp to take full control of Meralco because aside from the 33.4% stocks directly held by the Lopezes, the latter can still count on the 9% vote exercised by holders of MERALCO officials and employees' retirement fund, aside from that of other stockholders under their influence.

Meanwhile, the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE) and GSIS employees strongly oppose plans by GSIS Chairman Winston Garcia to risk their pension funds in the

Arroyo regime's war against Meralco. They stressed that since it is the government employees who collectively own GSIS and not Garcia, he has no right to utilize the system's funds for such purposes. In the end, a government takeover of Meralco will only favor Arroyo and her cronies such as the Aboitizes (who have interests in power production) and the Razons (who have interests in power transmission). It will be a case of shifting the Lopezes' monopoly over Meralco to the Arroyo clique. AB

New evidence against Arroyo's anomalous NBN-ZTE deal revealed

Photographs emerged in May revealing that five months before the signing of the scuttled NBN-ZTE contract, Gloria and Mike Arroyo, together with former Speaker Jose de Venecia, former COMELEC Chairman Benjamin Abalos and others went to Shenzhen, China to meet with ZTE Corporation officials.

The Arroyo couple's meeting with ZTE officials was off limits to the media. The de Venecias, who were in Hong Kong for a vacation, were issued a last-minute invitation to the meeting. De Venecia revealed that he was invited to assure the Chinese corporation officials that his son Joey would not be a stumbling block to the project.

The pictures were taken by a certain "Alex" who was part of the group that trooped to Shenzhen. He is now under the custody of opposition Vice Gov. Rolox Suplico of Iloilo.

The pictures only prove that Arroyo has had knowledge all along of the negotiations regarding the NBN-ZTE deal and that it was in her personal interest that the project push through.

This belies Arroyo's earlier claim that she only got to know of the contract's details and "flaws" on the eve of its signing in April 2007. If Malacañang used to vehemently deny that Arroyo met with ZTE officials then, the Palace has now been left with no choice but to admit that such a meeting took place.

Former Speaker de Venecia is set to testify before the Senate to disclose what really transpired in the meeting in Shenzhen. AB

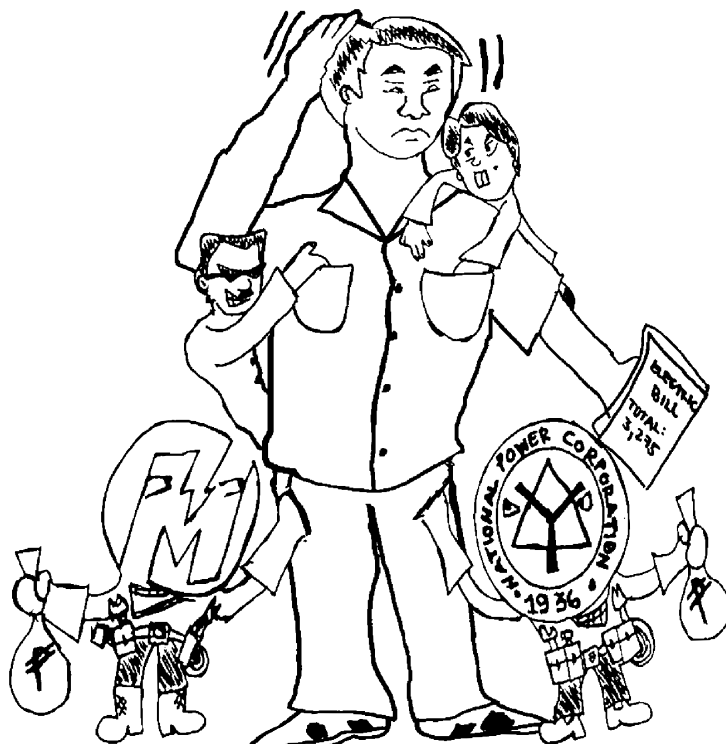
Severely exploiting consumers of electricity

MERALCO and the Lopezes' huge responsibility for the anomalies, manipulation, excessive charges and profit involved in the generation and distribution of electricity are only one side of the truth. Gloria Arroyo and her regime have far bigger accountabilitys.

The main reason behind high power rates is Arroyo's privatization and deregulation policies and the attendant exploitation and anomalies in the supply and distribution of electricity.

Immediately upon Arroyo's assumption to power in 2001, she pushed for the implementation of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) that paved the way for laws, rationalizations, policies and measures that intensified monopoly control over power and led to higher charges for electricity. It is not surprising that less than a year after EPIRA's implementation, electricity rates had doubled.

The EPIRA made it easy for NAPOCOR, the Power Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), TRANSCO, the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), Meralco and other public and private companies under their thumb involved in the generation, delivery



and distribution of electricity to connive with each other to further exploit consumers and jack up power rates. They are able to do this by manipulating accounts and passing their own expenses and liabilities to consumers, among other forms of thievery.

The biggest anomalies and grandest larcenies committed against consumers of electricity are those perpetrated by the regime and its minions through NAPOCOR, which controls more than 70% of the country's power supply. With the purported goal of improving the financial position of the heavily-indebted NAPOCOR and thereby facilitating its privatization, the regime passed on to consumers the burden of paying P200 billion of NAPOCOR's direct foreign debt of over P550 billion (\$11 billion). This it did as soon as EPIRA was approved. The amount excludes its over P770 billion indebtedness to local power producers. There has been no end to NAPOCOR's borrowing, bankruptcy and anomalies so that its outstanding foreign debt now stands at more than \$7 billion (P350 billion). (The administration plans to conceal this by having PSALM and electricity consumers assume these debts.)

To push for NAPOCOR's privatization by making it look profitable, it intentionally charges high rates for electricity sold to power distributors. One way of doing this is to charge higher rates during peak hours.

NAPOCOR gives huge discounts to companies in export processing zones but makes up for the loss by charging the discounts to the poor who comprise the majority of consumers.

From April through August of last year, NAPOCOR also suddenly bought coal from abroad in reaction to soaring oil prices and the

power crisis, but at prices that were more than double that of prevailing world market prices. NAPOCOR managers pocketed the overcharge of \$54 per ton or a total of P877 million for 65,000 tons of coal.

Another NAPOCOR anomaly involves the huge salaries (over P123,000 per month) paid to its executives and its allocation of P12 billion in retirement funds for NAPOCOR managers. Twenty-five NAPOCOR managers took advantage of the fund by "retiring" and pocketing over P119 million worth of benefits, after which they were immediately "rehired" by the company. Some managers also set up their own "independent power producers" and conspired to have NAPOCOR buy power from them at extremely high rates.

To step up the deregulation of the power sector, the Arroyo regime put up WESM for the purpose of establishing a so-called "open public market" for electricity that would encourage competition among independent producers. But in just three months, NAPOCOR in collusion with PSALM managed to manipulate power distribution, jacking up the cost of electricity from P2.72 per kWh to P4.853. Even MERALCO has protested that the rate had soared to P7.27 per kWh through WESM.

Another heavy burden on consumers is the value-added tax (VAT) imposed on electricity. MERALCO and other power distributors pocket a huge chunk of the 12% VAT they slap on the electricity they sell to consumers. They also charge VAT on all their power purchases, including those coming from VAT-exempt entities (about 25% of power producers). MERALCO also charges and pockets the VAT it imposes for "system loss"

(or power lost due to technical problems and pilferage) even though "system loss" should be the company's sole responsibility. Worse, MERALCO slyly includes in the system loss charge the company's own electrical consumption of up to 72 million kilowatt-hours amounting to as much as P427 million annually.

Aside from the secret deals it forges with government agencies such as NAPOCOR, WESM and ERC, the Lopezes, through MERALCO and its sister companies, are themselves responsible for abusing, defrauding and exploiting consumers of electricity.

The Lopezes take advantage of EPIRA's encouragement of power distributors to buy as much as half of their power needs from their own sister companies. While MERALCO acquires 60% of its power needs from its sister companies during off-peak hours (thus paying cheaper rates), it intentionally buys its other requirements from NAPOCOR and WESM during peak hours (thus paying higher rates). MERALCO, however, bills its customers using power purchase rates during peak-hours.

MERALCO also buys electric meters, power posts, power transmission units and information technology equipment from Lopez-owned companies, earning from this an additional P3 billion per year.

MERALCO even conspired with NAPOCOR to have their mutual indebtedness of P20 billion written off by having consumers assume these loans.

MERALCO likewise passes on to its consumers its expenses on expansion projects and from 1994 until 2002, passed on its P30 billion income tax payments by again charging this to consumers. The Supreme Court has ordered a

refund, but MERALCO has reimbursed only ₱14.4 billion to date.

MERALCO charges consumers for deposits on electric meters, collecting up to ₱21.4 billion from 2004 to 2007. It pocketed the huge interests on these deposits and did not refund its consumers, a practice found to be in violation of the Magna Carta for Residential Consumers. The courts thus ordered MERALCO to return the money to consumers, but to date, the company has yet to comply with the order.

MERALCO also charges the bloated salaries and privileges of its managers to its customers. The combined salaries of eight of its officers come to ₱97 million while its directors and other managers receive as much as ₱170 million.

In actuality, MERALCO's net income of ₱3.6 billion in 2007 is humongous enough. But financial reports submitted by First Philippine Holdings (the Lopez-owned holding company that manages all their properties) purport that it is not MERALCO but its sister companies that are the source of most of the family's income. This is because the Lopezes have been manipulating accounts to conceal the enormous profits being raked in by MERALCO.

First Philippine Holdings, which directly controls 33.4% of MERALCO stocks in behalf of the Lopezes, earns a net income of more than ₱10 billion every year. In the past two years, it netted ₱11.7 billion and ₱16.6 billion, respectively. MERALCO's sister companies solely owned by the Lopezes also profit immensely, the most profitable of which is First Gas. From an initial capital investment of only ₱8 billion, it now earns up to ₱7 billion annually.

AB

Fuelling hunger across the globe

One of the main reasons for food scarcity, soaring food prices and widespread hunger across the globe is the massive conversion of land originally used for food production to biofuel production.

With many more potential sources of biofuel compared to fossil fuel, it is to the interest of international capitalist giants to promote the production of ethanol along with other types of biofuel.

Rich countries such as the United States consume most of the world's fossil fuel production to sustain their industrial, military and transportation needs, among others. Their consumption of petroleum products continues to rise in the face of the latter's limited and diminishing supply. This, along with the imperialists' control over the supply and demand for oil continues to jack up fuel prices. This condition is further aggravated by the chaotic political situation in the Middle East and other main sources of oil.

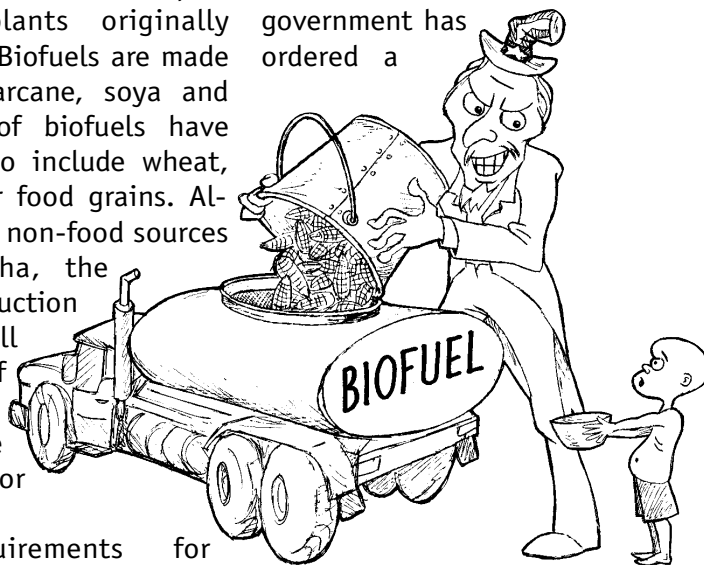
Most biofuels, hyped as cheaper and environment-friendly alternatives to fossil fuels, are produced from plants originally meant for food. Biofuels are made from corn, sugarcane, soya and palm. Sources of biofuels have now expanded to include wheat, barley and other food grains. Although there are non-food sources such as jatropha, the large-scale production of biofuels will entail the use of vast tracts of land that are better used for food production.

Grain requirements for

ethanol production is high. For instance, as much as 25 kilos of corn is needed to produce 2.77 gallons or 11 liters of ethanol. It thus takes 136 kilos of corn to fill an average 60-liter gas tank with ethanol—the equivalent of more than eight months of food supply for an individual based on an average consumption of 200 kilos per capita annually.

Former Cuban president Fidel Castro has stated that the aggressive campaigns of rich countries to step up biofuel production will cause almost three billion people to die of starvation. Jean Ziegler, United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food has likewise declared biofuel production as a crime against humanity. Amid the escalating food crisis worldwide, Ziegler has urged a five-year moratorium on biofuel production.

The US is the foremost crusader for biofuel production as a means of overcoming threats to oil supply and soaring prices of petroleum products. It is also the world's top producer of ethanol. Urged by giant car manufacturers in the US, the Bush government has ordered a



100% increase in the number of ethanol-fed cars in the country by 2012. The Bush government has also forged an agreement with car manufacturers to reduce by 20% the country's dependence on fossil fuel in the next 10 years.

The European Union, on the other hand, has issued a directive calling for biofuels to meet 5.75% of transportation fuel needs by 2010. France and Germany have announced that they intend to meet the target even before the deadline.

Such programs can only lead to an increasing demand for biofuel in the next few years—a demand that will require more land allocated for biofuel production. In the European Union, for example, the targeted biofuel consumption by 2010 necessitates the conversion of up to 25% of its agricultural land.

Imperialist countries obviously do not want to sacrifice their own food production to manufacture

biofuels. This is the main reason why they have instead been pushing for the large-scale production of biofuels in poorer countries. For years, they have been convincing and pushing impoverished countries to come up with programs and laws for increased biofuel production. Last year, the US signed a biofuel production deal with Brazil, the second biggest ethanol producer in the world.

The imperialists and their puppet regimes have been denying the culpability of biofuel production in the current food crisis. To conceal this fact, they brandish its so-called long-term benefits such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming. These arguments are questionable based on the following premises: The use of biofuels as an alternative does not translate to diminished use of fossil fuel. In the US, every stage of ethanol production

employs fossil fuels and other toxic chemicals, from fertilizers to fuel for tractors, processing and transport of the finished product. As a matter of fact, the fossil fuel requirement for corn production is 30% higher than the volume of ethanol actually produced from it.

In the European Union, most biofuels consumed are imported from Brazil, where the Amazon forest is relentlessly being cleared to give way to huge sugar cane and soya plantations, and Southeast Asia, where forests are likewise being destroyed and the land converted to palm plantations. Deforestation is one of the major causes of global warming.

The imperialists clearly could not care less whether their mad rush to develop biofuels causes and aggravates world hunger. They are all too willing to sacrifice the lives of billions of peoples across the globe just to feed their selfish interests. **AB**

Biofuels production in the Philippines

The Biofuels Act signed into law in the Philippines in January 2007 requires oil companies to mix in increasing proportions of biofuel in gasoline and diesel, with an end-goal of reducing the country's dependence on oil importation. Foreign oil companies from Australia, Japan, US, China, United Kingdom, Germany and India together with their local comprador business partners have already invested as much as P34.08 billion in biofuel production.

Among the first companies to cash in on biofuel production was the Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) Alternative Fuels Corp., which has invested \$2.3 billion in partnership with NRG Chemical Engineering of the United Kingdom. They plan to plant jatropha in up to one million hectares of land in Palawan and Mindanao, disregarding the destruction this may cause to the soil and the environment.

Aside from the one million hectares already allocated, another four million hectares of land will be made available to accommodate biofuel production. On-going projects already cover 725,300 hectares.

In the face of worsening hunger, food shortages and rising food prices, there is a growing clamor to suspend

or altogether scrap the Biofuels Act and prioritize the country's food security instead. The massive conversion of sugar cane plantations and the growing proportion of sugar cane harvests allocated to ethanol production have earned severe criticism. Aside from jacking up the prices of sugar in the market, the large-scale conversion of sugar cane plantations to bioethanol distilleries and the resulting crop conversion are being used by landlords to evade coverage by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Through this scheme, the Arroyo family aims to exempt from CARP the 157-hectare Hacienda Bacan and their other haciendas in Negros.

The Arroyos will also profit immensely once ethanol distilleries are put up on their land. An ethanol plant with a manufacturing capacity of 100,000 liters per day can earn as much as P3.2 million. Sugar cane sold for ethanol production, on the other hand, can bring in as much as P65,000 annually per hectare.

Big foreign companies have also invaded sugar cane plantations in Negros and Panay to set up ethanol distilleries and shift increasing volumes of the sugar cane harvest to biofuel production. **AB**



Military assassinates KMP leader in Davao City

The brutal murder of a peasant leader in Davao and the illegal abduction of an NDF consultant in Cagayan Valley top Arroyo's list of human rights violations in the past few weeks.

May 15. Military men shot dead a peasant leader in Davao City at around 6:30 in the morning. The victim was identified as Celso Pojas, 45, spokesperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in Southern Mindanao and secretary-general of the Farmers Association in Davao City (FADC). Pojas was buying cigarettes near the FADC office in Bugac, Maa, Davao City when two armed men riding a motorcycle shot him at close range. Pojas was supposed to join a medical mission and visit evacuees in Compostela Valley that day. He had been receiving death threats from the military prior to this incident due to his active involvement in anti-militarization campaigns in ComVal province. He was the 904th victim of extrajudicial killings and the 105th KMP leader murdered under the Arroyo regime.

That same day, military and police elements abducted an NDF consultant in Cagayan Valley and former officer of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP). Randy Malayao, 38, was on his way to visit relatives in Rosario, Pasig when he was seized by elements from the Philippine Army 5th Infantry Division and PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group. He was deprived of his right to counsel and to communicate

with relatives and was only presented to the media five days after his illegal arrest. Malayao was Vice President for Visayas of the CEGP in 1991 and former editor-in-chief of *Ang Mangingisda (The Fisherman)*, the campus newspaper of the University of the Philippines in Miag-ao, Iloilo.

May 14. Two innocent civilians were wounded by elements of the 78th IB during an encounter with the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay Igcabugao, Igaras, Iloilo. The victims were identified as Jose Gabion, 40, and his 10-year old daughter Jessica. The residents who came to their rescue had to walk 10 kilometers to bring them to the nearest hospital. Instead of extending help, the government soldiers immediately fled from the scene of the incident.

May 7. Military troopers beat up a barangay chairman, along with three others in Roxas, North Cotabato. Jimmy Requeta, chairman of Barangay Ilustre and concurrently the president of the Association of Barangay Captains in their town was surrounded by five soldiers along the highway and mauled after an ambush launched by Red fighters on the 39th IB. The fascist

soldiers took out their anger on Requeta who was accused of being an accomplice of the NPA. The soldiers also ordered all the other men in the barrio to line up along the highway and kneel while undergoing interrogation on what they knew about the ambush. Requeta immediately reported the beating to the town mayor and plans to file charges against the abusive soldiers.

That same day, Glaiza Dimapilis, 19, was put under surveillance and harassed by an operative who identified himself as an agent of the Intelligence Service of the AFP. Dimapilis chairs the National Union of Students in the Philippines-National Capital Region and is student council president at the Philippine Christian University. Dimapilis said that she was tailed by Mike Santos, an alleged ISAFP agent, while on her way home. Santos reportedly told her that she was in the military's order of battle (a hit list of the AFP), that there was a standing shoot-to-kill order on her and that she could be arrested anytime even without a warrant. Santos likewise talked to Dimapilis' parents on the morning of May 9 and told them to put a stop to her activities. He also told them to go to an AFP camp near their house to talk to military officials. Dimapilis was also offered a job as military asset but the student leader refused.

April 29. Elements of the Special Civilian Auxiliary Army (SCAA) and Black Fighter paramilitary group gunned down Datu Doming Diarog, leader of the Guangan-Cлата tribe, in his house in Sitio Kahusayan, Barangay Manuel Guianga, Calinan, Davao City. The



gunmen peppered Diarog with 17 M14 bullets, killing him and wounding his wife Emily and two of their children aged 4 and 8. Diarog was murdered due to his refusal to sell his two-hectare farm to Apollo Quiboloy, a local cult leader closely allied with the military and Davao City mayor Rodrigo Duterte. Diarog's property lies between the Prayer Mountain and a forested area both owned by Quiboloy. The 73rd IB/Task Force Davao under Lt. Col. Alexander Ambal purposely organized the SCAA and the Black Fighter for the sole purpose of protecting Quiboloy's interests. Quiboloy is notorious for grabbing the lands of national minorities in the area.

April 17. The military denied detained Kasama-TK member Rose Ann Gumanoy, 21, the right to be visited by her mother. Rose Ann is currently being detained at the AFP Medical Center in V. Luna, Quezon City after suffering gunshot wounds inflicted by elements of the 202nd Bde. Her attending physician had to go out of the hospital to talk to Mrs. Gumanoy who was denied entry at the hospital gate.

Rose Ann said in an interview that she was visiting the Carcer family on April 15 in their house in Sitio Macalla, Barangay Pagsangahan, General Nakar, Quezon when government soldiers started firing at them. Also wounded in the attack was Merie

Carcer, 50, and her 7-year old daughter Christine, who was shot in the left heel. Rose Ann has been charged



NPA condemns desecration of slain Red fighter's remains

The Agustin Begnalen Command (ABC) of the New People's Army-Abra and the people of Tubo, Abra condemned the savage conduct of the 50th IB and its gross violation of Protocol 1 of the Geneva Conventions and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

They particularly condemned 1Lt. John Pedrigosa and 1Lt. Abdul Rashid Avila, commanding officers of the 50th IB "C" Coy for beheading and desecrating the body of Sammy Rey "Ka Cholo" Cayaogo, a Red fighter martyred during an encounter with military elements on March 24 in Tubtuba, Tubo, Abra.

The villagers recounted how the soldiers of "C" Coy boasted of how they riddled Ka Cholo's body with over 50 bullets and how 2Lieutenant Avila beheaded the Red fighter using a bolo. Another soldier picked up a big rock and dropped it on the severed head, smashing the back of Ka Cholo's skull.

Quite unsatisfied, they also cut off Ka Cholo's hand and foot.

The Red guerrillas spent almost a month scouring the scene of the fighting to retrieve Ka Cholo's remains and send his body to his parents. This they did amid continued operations by the 50th IB and 52nd Recon Coy along the Abra-Mountain Province-Ilocos Sur tri-boundary. They found his decomposing body on April 21.

The brutality committed by the 50th IB on Ka Cholo is but the latest in their long list of nefarious crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement.

The Agustin Begnalen Command and Ka Cholo's family plan to file a formal complaint before the Joint Monitoring Committee against the 50th IB and the 503rd Infantry Brigade. The ABC also vowed that the 50th IB will pay dearly for desecrating Ka Cholo's remains.

AB

with rebellion before RTC Branch 65 in Infanta, Quezon. She is the daughter of martyred peasant leader Eddie Gumanoy who was murdered by forces led by "the butcher" Jovito Palparan in Mindoro Oriental in April 2003.

March 4. NBN-ZTE deal key witness Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada Jr., reported in a press conference at the National Press Club the attempted abduction of his 12-year old daughter. Lozada said a man who introduced himself as a member of

the Senate security staff came to fetch his daughter from school and bring her home. His daughter had suspicions, prompting her to call her mother who in turn told her not to leave with the man. Lozada identified the man as a driver employed by the Philippine Forest Corporation. He believes that the incident is part of the regime's vain efforts to silence him and threaten his family due to his continuous revelations of scandals surrounding the NBN-ZTE deal.

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Nationwide transport strike

A nationwide transport strike on May 12 paralyzed 80% of transportation in several cities in Metro Manila, the Visayas and Mindanao. The strike was spearheaded by the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide or PISTON to protest unabated price increases of petroleum products. The drivers also demanded the junking of the Oil Deregulation Law and the removal of the 12% value added tax (VAT) on petroleum products. Lifting the VAT is expected to reduce gasoline and diesel prices by ₱4-5

and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by ₱75.

The nationwide strike spurred the Arroyo government to order a provisional increase in jeepney and bus fares in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. PISTON, however, belittled this effort, saying that the move will have an insignificant effect on suffering drivers who can hardly cope with continuing oil prices hikes. The militant drivers said they would pursue their demands.

Ka Bel dies

VETERAN worker leader and progressive congressman Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran, 75, died at 11:48 a.m. of May 20 due to severe head injuries sustained after falling off the roof of his house in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Among those who sent their condolences were the National Democratic Front of the Philippines; fellow progressive representatives led by Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna; fellow union workers at the Kilusang Mayo Uno; militant leaders like Ka Rafael Mariano, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chairperson and Anakpawis Party president; leaders and members of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and its allied organizations; fellow oppositionists in Congress; and countless others.

From the parliament of the streets to the hallways of Congress, Ka Bel relentlessly championed the cause of the workers and toiling masses.

His political conviction led to his arrest and detention by the reactionary state during the US-Marcos dictatorship, and again, in February 2006 when Arroyo declared a state of national emergency. On the day he died, he was preparing for his privilege speech in Congress calling for the passage into law of the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill and a ₱125 legislated wage increase. Of late, he was among those who actively participated in Congress deliberations on high power rates.

Ka Bel, along with Ka Felixberto (Ka Bert) Olalia led the militant labor movement. He was one of the founders of KMU and became its president upon the death of Ka Lando Olalia. He has been a representative of progressive parties in Congress since 2001—first, as Bayan Muna representative, and eventually, as Anakpawis representative from 2004 until his death.

Another round of tuition fee increases

TUITION fees are expected to rise in June in over 300 private schools due to Malacañang's suspension of Memorandum Order No. 14 prohibiting private schools from hiking tuition fees beyond the prevailing inflation rate.

According to the League of Filipino Students, a 50% drop in enrolment in private schools is expected as a result of the tuition fee hike.

Malaysian troops leave Mindanao in protest

MALAYSIA ordered on May 12 the recall of 28 of a total of 41 soldiers and police officers comprising the International Monitoring Team deployed in various areas in Mindanao. The move was to protest the impasse in the peace talks resulting from the Government of the Republic of the Philippines' decision to scrap the previous accords signed with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

In December 2007, MILF negotiators were angered at the Arroyo regime's insistence that earlier agreements signed between both parties after more than three years of negotiations should adhere to the Philippine constitution. The MILF said that the Arroyo regime was obviously gearing for war after it junked and violated 49 agreements on ancestral domain which pertained to the size of territory that the Moro people should govern.

The remaining members of the International Monitoring Team are scheduled to leave before September.